

Oldenburg
11 March 1860.

My dear Sir,

It is almost half a year ago, since I heard last from you, which was shortly before my Paris journey. I have often and anon reproached myself with not writing to you in order to get sure that you are well off, you and yours. But there was so great a deal of business to transact that I could hardly stand it myself and from overwork fell really sick about Christmas. So you had always my good and sincere wishes but never any of my letters. I beg you most heartily that you may not misconstrue me for my silence.

The reasons for being so overcharged with business were the following ones. At Paris while

going through the Oxydar - Manuscripts (seventeen
in number), which by a special leave of the Admini-
stration got through the recommendations of our Ministry.
I was also allowed to take to my lodgings, I was in-
dubly anxious to get all the Varia Lectio hitherto neglected
and brought home a considerable treasure or what at
least to me appeared as such. Then I took to dispos-
ing and comparing all I had and am now so far advanced
as to be able to give quite a new constitution of the
text within about another twelve months.

When I was just setting out for Paris, one of our
first publishers, Mr. Brockhaus (Leipzig), addressed him-
self to me on account of a new Shakespeare. Edition
to be published under my name. He wanted to have short
explanatory notes under the text, and Introductions like
those of your Edition, both written in English. Though
I did hardly feel able to undertake such a task, the
copy-money offered for the whole (250 £) was too conside-
rable for my circumstances to refuse it positively, and so
I tried to further my Oxydarus with more speed. But
I soon perceived that it was impossible to undertake
both these works at once. Therefore I have now, after
some fruitless trials to hasten my Greek poet, which
nearly have nearly overthrown my health, resolved
upon leaving the task of that new Shakespeare to
other hands, only perhaps superintending it and taking a
superficial review of the Notes and Introductions in the
manuscript, if the Publisher (though I am not bound by contract)

insists upon having my name for it if only as an assis-
stant. I had from the first objected to writing notes
or in English, as I am quite conscious of not managing
it but as a foreigner does. And even if I had more
opportunity to converse with English people, it is a very
different thing to express one's mind with a tolerable
distinctness and to master a language with the ease
and fluency of an author. Therefore I am, on the whole,
glad to come off a task which would be above me,
though my finances would improve by it. Had the
idea of the ^{King of} ~~Munich~~ Bavaria not thoroughly failed, I
might have done something useful by way of publi-
shing the ancient editions with some accuracy; now
I abandon the thought of any such larger projects.
I cannot avoid being regarded a scholar in the Shake-
spearean ~~way~~ line, that is to say, in our country, and
am now and then almost reluctantly pronouncing my
opinion about one controversy or other (as of late about
Dyce's Edition, which I could [as far as I have got in these
quarters] not judge of so favourably as others may). ~~and so~~ So
I should like to be able to tell a word about the Corruptor
and the miserable attacks that have last summer been de-
villed against you on that head, as my friends press me to do
so, but I am too little instructed about the state of the affairs
of which I know nothing but what I collect from the
scanty paragraphs of the Athenaeum.

Some Andar Manuscripts, which have hitherto escaped
the notice of the Editors, are yet in England, two at Ox-
ford (besides the five Bodleiani, which are though not fully

yet sufficiently known), one at Cambridge (indicated as of the "Collegium S. Emanuelis"), a fourth at Westminster (Codex Westmonasteriensis Pindari Olympia Pythia Nemea continens). The indications of these MSS. have been given in the old Catalogue MSSorum Anglicorum, and nothing else of them is known to me. I should be happy to receive some better information about them and would thank you for references in that respect; the Westminster MS. is probably in the British Museum, is it not? I want to have a more accurate description of the contents and the probable age of them together with some pages out of each collated with one of the current editions.

At Paris I made the acquaintance of M. Victor Caussin and of M. Villemain who received me very kindly. Into the "Académie des Inscriptions & Belles Lettres" I was also introduced, and attended at the sessions. The conversation and amiableness of these gentlemen I liked much better than the French cooking, which did my stomach so little good that I only felt better when I had found out an English tavern.

My wife and children are well, God be praised: It is only myself who have been suffering this winter, not without my own fault. Your god-daughter is prospering, in a very quiet way, for she is always good-humoured, and none of my children has given ^{it} ~~their~~ mother so little trouble. Remember me most respectfully to your amiable daughters, and let me soon know that they as well as yourself are in good health and happiness.

I am, my dear sir,

yours very sincerely

Olyons Mommesen

John Payne Collier, Esq.